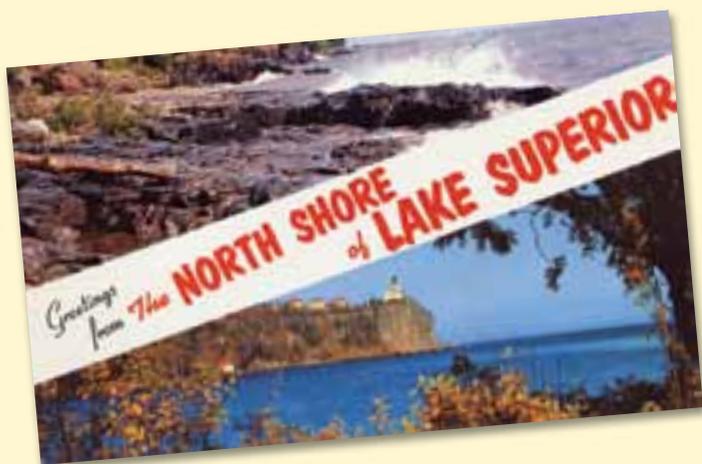
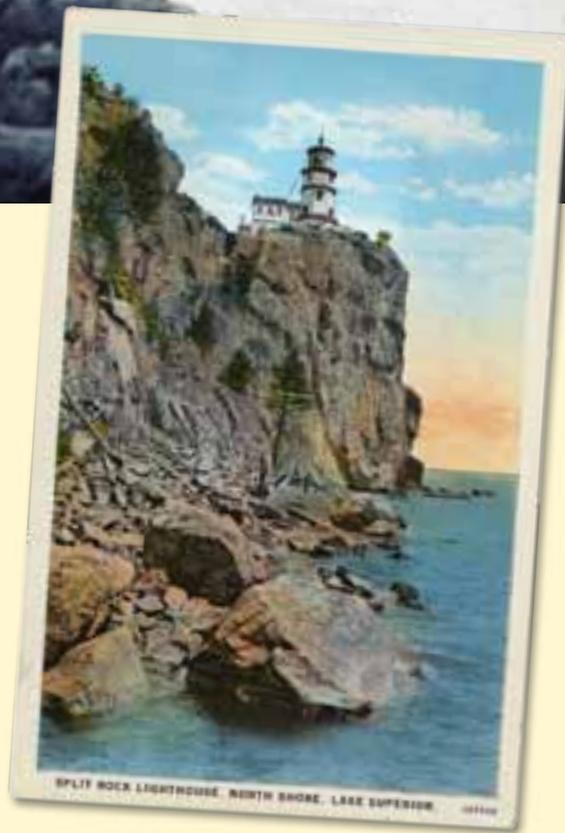
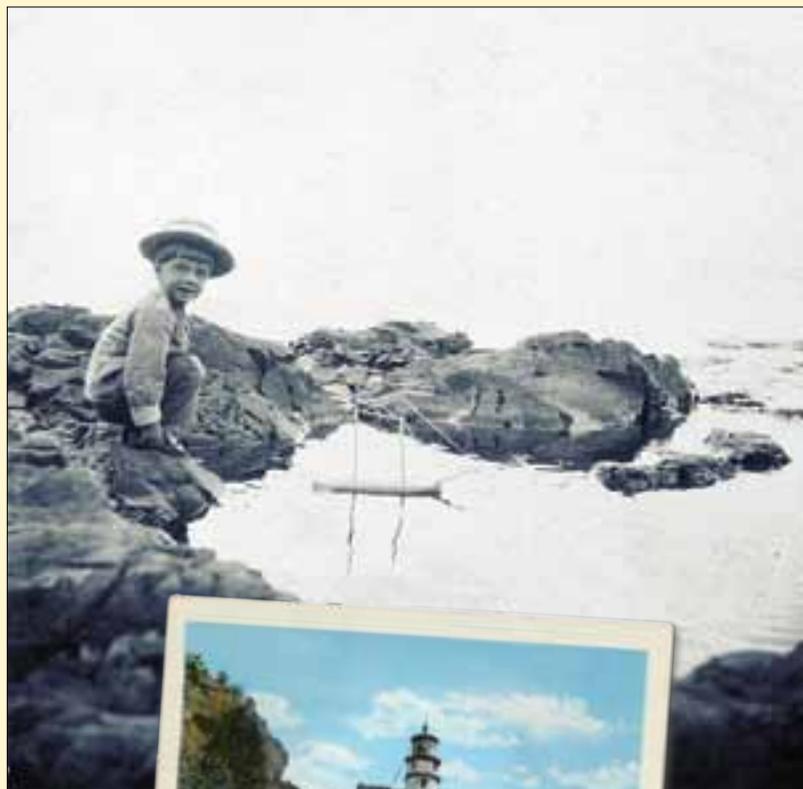




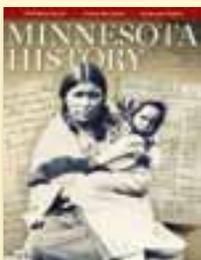
BUILT IN RESPONSE to a devastating Lake Superior gale in November 1905 that wrecked or damaged 29 ships, Split Rock Lighthouse has been a Minnesota icon since its beam was first lit a century ago, on July 31, 1910. The earliest postcards of the popular place used family photographs taken by lighthouse staff. The example at right, from 1911, portrays Harold Benton at age 4 or 5, playing on the rocks below the station. It was taken by his father Lee, assistant keeper at Split Rock.

It wasn't until the opening of the North Shore Highway in 1924 that tourism at the site really took off. By the late 1930s, Split Rock hosted tens of thousands of visitors a year. In 1939, when the Coast Guard absorbed the Lighthouse Service, it publicized Split Rock as "probably the most-visited lighthouse in the United States." Not surprisingly, many postcards date from this era.

To see more Split Rock Lighthouse images, visit the Minnesota Historical Society's Visual Resources database at www.mnhs.org/photos. To see more Split Rock postcards and share any you might have, visit www.flickr.com/groups/splitrockpostcards.



Clockwise from top: Postcards of Split Rock Lighthouse and environs, 1910s, 1930s, and 1940s. All images in MHS collections.



About the Cover

In the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, more than 1,600 Indian and mixed-blood noncombatants, including this woman and child, were imprisoned on the Minnesota River flats below Fort Snelling. Their internment was a boon to the entrepreneurs whom the federal government paid to maintain them, but the real treasure was in the hands of the mixed-blood prisoners: scrip they had received in lieu of the land granted them in the 1830s. The careful records of fort owner Franklin Steele and his business partners document the scrip they obtained from prisoners and then spun into millions of dollars: at left, an 1863 list of original owners of scrip, now "belonging to Franklin Steele" and for sale in Nevada Territory; at right, expenses and income from such sales. For the story of this operation, see the article beginning on page 4. (Unidentified woman and child photographed by Joel E. Whitney, 1862/63; documents photographed by Eric Mortenson/MHS.)



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